



# VISION 2020

## SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

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## INTRODUCTION

In September 2012, small groups, representing about 350 Eastminster members, began meeting once a week to prayerfully discern who God is calling us to be and what God is calling us to do by the year 2020. These groups met for eight weeks and explored topics ranging from faith formation for children to stewardship and kingdom building. After each meeting, the groups submitted their input to Julie McDaniel, who sent it to the 16 members of the Coordinating Team. All told, more than 2,400 specific items of input were submitted. More important, every one of those 2,400 items has been saved and may be seen in Dropbox.

The challenge for the Coordinating Team was to take those 2,400 items and organize, synthesize, and present them in a final report. The team divided into four groups of four members each, and each group took primary responsibility for reviewing and summarizing all of the small group input from two of the eight sessions. Then the entire team reviewed the final reports from the four groups.

Looking at the input from that perspective, the Coordinating Team agreed we needed to share the results in two formats: first, a narrative picture of Eastminster in the year 2020, and then a detailed presentation of major goals for topics covered in the small groups and members' visions for how those goals can be accomplished. For example, if you are interested in ideas for Mission and Evangelism, you can go to that section in the report and read those ideas. Because there is overlap in ministries (for example, Our Life Together and Congregational Care), similar ideas appear in more than one section.

The Coordinating Team recognizes and appreciates that each member of each small group spent a great deal of time and effort preparing, praying, meeting and submitting input as to what you believe God is leading Eastminster to be as His Church in 2020. We believe God heard those prayers and will lead us in answering them.

March 1, 2013

## IT'S THE YEAR 2020 AT EASTMINSTER

*I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. **Philippians 1:3-6***

Welcome to Eastminster! We are delighted you have chosen to visit here today, and we invite you to become one with us in this connectional church. We are connected, first of all, to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church and Lord of all. This body of believers has been “sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.” That “first day” was in 1948, and that “sharing of the gospel” continues to inform our worship, study, service, care and outreach.

We experience connection to each other in small groups, across generations as well as with people our own age, in families and as individuals. Furthermore, we are connected to our neighbors locally and throughout the world in mission and service.

We believe our campus is a physical connection to lifelong faith formation. You see the sign pointing to the Eastminster Day School. Come by on a weekday to see how dedicated teachers educate and equip our young children, believing “if you train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old he will not depart from it.” Later in the day, you can walk down the halls and hear sounds of children engaged in after-school programs, tutoring, Scouts and music. Listen, also, to the quiet that abounds in our chapel, where any hour of the day people can come for prayer and worship, and where we have services during the week.

Stop by our Christian Life Center, which expresses our belief our created bodies are temples. This has become quite a community hub, attracting diverse ages to exercise programs as well as classes on nutrition and healthy living. In other rooms some are engaged in Bible study, but others are in needs-based groups. For example, we have support groups ranging from new parents to caregivers for loved ones with dementia. In one room there might be a class on computer skills. In another, there might be a book discussion.

We opened the coffee house to attract college students, and it's done that and more. It's fast becoming an intergenerational gathering spot. We hope we'll never need to turn this center into a shelter, but should disaster strike our city, we have a plan for turning it into a refuge for victims.

We updated our sanctuary in 2013 and 2014. When we returned to the sanctuary after the renovations had been completed, we were thrilled to see members who had not been able to come for several years because of various physical limitations.

We love how our mobile campus connects us to our larger community and world. Our four buses transport members to areas of service and bring others here for programs and activities. In addition, on any given day, there might be small groups meeting in restaurants, homes, and offices. And when we're not connected in person, we rely on

technology for everything from daily devotional material to our congregational on-line bulletin board where people post needs and find resources.

Finally, we are connected to the PCUSA. This year we will introduce our “Introduction to Discipleship” program to other churches in the denomination. It has been in development for more than five years and links all aspects of life to adult faith formation.

God has richly blessed this church to be a blessing, and several of our members would like to share with you their own stories of how that has happened.

## EASTMINSTER TESTIMONIALS

### Visitors

In the spring of 2020, being new to the city, we chose Eastminster as a church to visit. And several folks were standing around the visitors' parking area when we arrived. When we got out of the car, one man approached, welcomed us, gave us bulletins, and escorted us to the sanctuary as he told us about the church. He wanted to know if this was our first visit and if we needed directions to Sunday school classes after the service. We responded that it was our first visit, and my wife and I and our two teen children did indeed need directions to Sunday school classes. He seated us in the sanctuary and agreed to meet us in the foyer after the service to give us an overview of the different adult classes and take us to the Sunday school classes of our choice.

All I recall about the service other than a fine sermon was the "minute for mission," something we learned later was a part of every service at Eastminster

The fellow who met us curbside was waiting on us afterward and first introduced us to the people manning the "visitors table." Then he took us to the classes, our teens' classes first. We felt warmth at Eastminster that first visit. And in the mail that week we received a letter of welcome from the senior pastor and coupons for coffee something the whole family enjoyed.

When we decided to join, we entered an inquirers class and found out what the church was all about: this is a missions church and a congregation of evangelism-oriented folks. There's one mission project for the whole church each year and smaller projects for Sunday school classes and other individual small groups. And there's an interactive church website where one can sign up to offer their time and talents. All four of us signed up for something and each of us heard from a member of each project within a week of signing up.

Evangelism is taught in classes annually as Evangelism 101 on Wednesday nights at the CLC. Our teens were most impressed with the teen hangout in the CLC where youngsters could come anytime with their friends for coffee and Wi-Fi for their laptops and casual chats. The CLC is also a place for athletic competitions, and each of these is preceded with a prayer and many times there's pizza and half time guitar music. The CLC is open to the entire community to participate there. And there are courses on sewing, on crafts, on cooking and Bible study for anyone in the community who wishes to participate. Other evangelism projects include "caring casseroles" for shut-ins and dinners for university students who are away from home, including international students, especially during the holidays. And gift packages and letters make up projects for our members who are in the military and for college kids who are at school away from the city.

Eastminster is a caring church with wonderful outreach programs in missions and evangelism.

## Young Couple with Children

I was asked to give a testimony to the congregation during the Jubilee service at Eastminster this week, and I've been trying to work on my message. I thought I'd run it by you to see what you think. Testimonials from church members are something I'm used to hearing, because they are shared at least once, if not twice a month. It's just harder when it's your story you are writing. There is so much I could say, but I really want to reflect on Eastminster and what this church has meant to me and my family. I joined Eastminster with my husband in 2013, and since that time we have been blessed to welcome two young children. My son is now 6, and my daughter is 2.

Eastminster has shown me what God's love is all about. I've been nurtured in difficult times and I've been given the opportunity to nurture others as well. My husband is in the military and had to go overseas for almost a year when my son was only a year old. That was a tough year, but I can't imagine going through it without my Eastminster Family. I'm really not one to ask for help, but there came a time when I realized that I had no choice. Eastminster made it easy with their "help wanted" section on the web-site. I desperately needed help with my lawn; it was something my husband had always done, and I'd had two lawn guys cancel on me. I was at my wits end! Less than a day after I posted my need, there was a member of Eastminster at my door ready to mow the grass. What a blessing that was. Since that time, I've returned the favor by offering assistance to others. I tutor math and I do one hour a week now, at no cost, as a service to my church family.

I also love the way Eastminster helps equip me with the tools I need to be the mother, friend, wife, (you get the picture) that God created me to be. There are marriage enrichment classes yearly, guest speakers on parenting, and even devotions for parents. I also enjoy the small groups I've joined. They have really helped me feel more connected to the church and have strengthened my faith.

Words can't describe how fortunate I feel to have my children growing up here as well. My son gets to participate in mission projects geared for his age group, and he loves his Sunday School class. He also loves the way we get to bring things to church to help others. Last week we brought Valentines cards for Bradley Elementary students to pass out to their friends. A few weeks ago we brought gloves and hats for the homeless.

My daughter attends Eastminster Day School and comes home talking about God and teaching me new fun songs. It warms my heart to know that Eastminster provides a scholarship program for a needy family each year by offering a spot in the day school for one child at no cost.

My children absolutely love the Jubilee service and the children's sermon there is great. Sometimes the message to the children is exactly what I needed to hear. I also love the way my children get to learn the meaning of tithing. My 6 year old now has his own envelopes. It's really teaching him what it means to give back to God!

I may have rambled, but I just felt like those were important things to say. My life would not be the same without my church family. Thank you, Eastminster.

## Singles

In 2015, I graduated from college and moved to Columbia to go to law school. From the minute I got here, I felt overwhelmed and stressed. I looked around for a gym I could afford, and somebody said Eastminster had one I could use for free. I had heard of Eastminster in college because it was the home church of a friend. I remember how Eastminster had stayed in touch with that friend all four years of college, so I decided to check out the gym.

On that first visit, I enrolled in an exercise class. At my first class, I was just sure I'd made a mistake. Everyone was older than I was, but one woman stayed after class to talk with me. She, too, was single, but our circumstances were different. In 2013, on a Saturday morning, her husband had had a fatal heart attack. She, at age 35, instantly became a single mom of two children, ages 8 and 6. A few months later, one of her neighbors mentioned a support group at Eastminster for widows with young children. Reluctantly, she joined. Now she helps lead groups for young widows with children. She told me there were other small groups that focused on unique needs, and one was for young singles. I decided to give it a try and met the most interesting people—some graduate students from various countries, some young professionals, one person who is serving in the military, and three people who are trying to figure out what they want to do with their lives and are still living at home.

My friend from the gym also said being single, she had often felt isolated, so she decided to join a Sunday School class that appealed to men and women, young and old, married and single. The topic changed every quarter, so new people were coming in all the time, and if there was a topic that did not appeal to you, you could find another class or go to the “gathering spot,” the place on Sunday morning where you came if you were serving communion or just wanted to visit with people over coffee. How could I lose? I went with her one Sunday and have never left. We are now studying various religions of the world, and because of that study, the class is about to embark on a cross-cultural mission project. Now that I'm a new associate in a law firm, I'm working long hours, but I've volunteered to work on articles and faith stories about the project for the website.

I look back on those first years in Columbia and the demands of law school and the Bar exam and the competitive job search, the economic reality of being a student, the loneliness I could feel after an evening with my married friends, and I thank God for Eastminster. Meeting my friend at the gym five years ago immediately took me beyond my own situation and led me to new and meaningful friendships. I now lead small groups on making the transition from college to the real world. That small group offers a lot a comfort and identity for its members, but recently one member suggested everyone find one mission or a Bible study to get involved in that is not part of the singles ministry. That was all I needed to start going to a Bible study that meets over breakfast downtown on Tuesday mornings.

## Empty Nester

I never, ever thought I'd be called a "church drop-out," but that's exactly what my friend called me one day while we were having lunch. I forgave her immediately because she said she was one, too. And of all the unlikely members of Eastminster! When my children were growing up, I was always at the church for one reason or another. Both my son—now 29—and my daughter—now 27—went to Eastminster Day School. My husband and I were also right there with them every Sunday, first volunteering in nursery and children's church, then shepherding them through confirmation and youth group. It sounds as though they are the reason we were so active, and they were key, no doubt about it. Once they left home, I guess I no longer knew where I fit in the church; I had an identity crisis of sorts.

"I miss being involved in the church," my friend said. "Problem is, where do I fit? Vacation Bible School, children's choirs, and Scouts belong to the younger parents."

"Well, then, I have an idea," I ventured, suddenly inspired. "Let's make a list of those projects we have always been interested in but never had time for when our children were growing up. Plus there are so many new opportunities to serve. It will be our Eastminster bucket list." We started listing, and that lunch changed our lives.

First we signed up for an in-town retreat. We met people who had joined Eastminster while we were on our church sabbaticals. Then our husbands joined us for the one-day mission focus a month later. This annual inter-generational event begins with an overview of four mission opportunities. We decided to each choose a different project. Since then we've been volunteering every month at a different one of the four. It's been just the structure our retired spouses needed. Best of all, once again, we have all made new friends in various age groups. We're even thinking about going to Haiti on an inter-generational mission trip.

Which leads me back to where I started. Several of our new friends have asked us to mentor current Scout leaders. And just last week I got a call from the chair of Vacation Bible School asking me to be a mentor for the volunteers. All that experience matters in a new way now.

We are gone a lot of Sundays because our children live out of town, and we enjoy our place in the mountains. We'll be gone even more once our first grandchild arrives in four months. What's so amazing, though, is the way technology has helped keep me engaged in the church. I depend on the online devotionals for my daily personal worship. I've also sampled various informal weekday worship services in the new chapel. A big missing piece, though, is a small group Bible study, another item on my list.

My husband and I are fortunate our parents are still healthy. I have heard how helpful the small groups have been to friends who are caring for their aging parents. I look around and see how Eastminster embraces lifelong faith formation, and I thank God I did not remain a church drop-out.

## Seniors

It wasn't too many years ago that Eastminster, as did a lot of other churches, seemed to take its older members a little bit for granted. EPC, as it should have, put a lot of emphasis and effort into its youth and young adults. We older folks were there on Sundays, and some of us took part in various ministries; but for the most part, we had to search out things to do and ways to serve.

As I look around now, though, I'm very pleasantly surprised at how we seniors are intentionally included in the life of the church. Eastminster 2020 honors its seniors by offering them a wide range of opportunities, camaraderie, and support at each stage of their lives.

I think the beginning of this increased focus on senior members came in 2013 when EPC implemented a process to help us seniors identify our needs and communicate those needs to the church. Throughout this process, the church was careful to recognize and respect the diversity of age, health, stations of life, and interests of our seniors.

One of the things that grew out of this process and that has paid large dividends was the development of a wide variety of activities and small groups for our seniors that included many opportunities for cross-generational interaction. I'm not sure who got the most out of the "mixings," we or the young people. I think we were surprised that the youths had a lot of good ideas and special knowledge, and the young people found that we had been through many of their trouble areas and were able to offer them some pretty good life advice. Part of their advice to us is that we need to stay physically fit; so, EPC developed a number of exercise classes, nutritional seminars and similar fitness activities for us. The youngsters even held classes for us on using computers and the "social media."

Another example of how seniors have been intentionally integrated into the life of the church is that EPC makes a concerted effort to share its many worship opportunities with shut-ins and others who cannot attend in person, some of whom are seniors and some of whom are not. The "special person" program has been expanded beyond the Deacons so members can make weekly visits to homebound members who desire them, and EPC records services to DVD and other portable media so that the homebound can view the services during these visits. Sometimes we seniors are homebound simply because we no longer drive, and EPC has established a transportation program to ensure that we can take part in many church activities.

A few years ago, the church began offering Bible studies, music programs and other activities at the Presbyterian Home, Still Hopes and other assisted-living facilities. The cross-generational idea was used once again, and our youth were integrated into these activities.

All in all, we seniors feel more like a functional, contributing and valued part of the church than we used to. It's nice to be wanted.

## Youth

As a high school junior, I used to get teased for spending so much time at my church, until I convinced some of my friends try it out. Now, they realize that hanging out at church can actually be fun. After the football game last Friday, we had a huge turnout at coffee bar in the CLC. My parents let me stay out until 12:30 because they “knew where I was.” Eastminster does this every Friday night during football season as a way for us to have fellowship with each other. A few members of our youth group even have a band, and we all sing along with them. A lot of the same teenagers take advantage of the open gym night in the CLC during the week and play pickup games of basketball.

Don't get me wrong; it's not all fun and games. Our youth minister “tweets” us a devotional every morning before school on a certain theme and then we discuss it on Sunday evenings. The readings aren't really that bad and actually help us try to be more “Christ-like” in our everyday lives. From our talks, we realize that we all struggle with the same stuff. It's not easy trying to do the right thing, but it definitely makes it easier when you can talk to other people.

A few weeks ago, a group of us visited some of the older members of the church who aren't able to get around on their own. I didn't really want to go, but it was actually pretty cool to talk to the elderly people, and they sure seemed glad to see us! Our college mentors organized the trip. Most of them grew up at EPC, but a few of them aren't from around here and have gotten involved through our new campus ministry program. Having the college students around is awesome because they know exactly what we are going through with school and everything as they were in the same position a few years ago.

Youth group has become so popular that a lot of teenagers from outside the church have begun attending. One of my friends even convinced his parents to start coming on Sunday. They have gotten very involved and are even attending a marriage class on Wednesday nights. He said that he has really noticed a difference in the way they act around each other and that their house has been a much happier place.

This summer I will be going on my third international mission trip. My little sister, who is in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, is going for the first time. It's a lot of hard work, but the EPC mission trips are a blast, and I look forward to them all year. During the school year, we have several other local mission opportunities that range from stocking shelves at the local food bank to working in the soup kitchen downtown.

If you decide to visit our church, you may notice a lot of military folks. Over the last few years, the church has really made an effort to minister to soldiers stationed at Fort Jackson. We also have become a lot more diverse over the past few years; African-Americans and Hispanics now make up a good percentage of the congregation. EPC is welcome to people in all walks of life, and there is something for everyone.

If you are interested in getting involved, just friend EPC on Facebook or follow us on Twitter. There are daily updates to keep everyone in the loop.

# DREAMS AND VISIONS FROM SMALL GROUPS

## I. Worship

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations. **Psalm 100***

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **Romans 12:1***

In 2020, Eastminster will be able to choose from a variety of opportunities, in time and style, for the worship of the living God.

### 1. Goal:

Many opportunities will exist for corporate worship of the living God that vary both in style and times throughout the week. These opportunities will integrate scripture, song, prayer, testimonials, sermons and sacraments in a reverent and communal manner that makes persons of all ages, races and backgrounds feel welcomed and loved by both God and the church.

### Action:

- A. More congregational reverence when entering the Sanctuary and during the worship service will be encouraged, including controlling entry into the Sanctuary during services and asking members to turn off and put away mobile phones and other electronic devices while in the Sanctuary. (2013)
- B. The “Pass the Peace” element of the Jubilee Service will be incorporated into Eastminster’s other services. (2013)
- C. A capital campaign will be conducted to support modifications to the Sanctuary and Thompson Hall to enhance the corporate worship experience by improving accessibility for those with physical limitations, improving the heating/air system, improving acoustics, moving the communion table closer to the congregation, having the choir face the congregation, etc. (2013)
- D. The Jubilee Service will be enhanced by involving the youth in elements of the service, creating a visitor’s station at the back of Thompson Hall, incorporating a children’s sermon and the Apostles’ Creed into the service, and incorporating a live sermon into the service. (2013)
- E. Members will be encouraged to bring their own Bibles to services. (2013)

- F. Eastminster will incorporate more “familiar” hymns and songs for the congregation to sing during the worship services, re-institute choir-swaps and adjust the volume of the instruments appropriately. (2013)
- G. The Staff will be encouraged to continue incorporating unison prayers into all services and to strive for concise prayers by the pastors and officers. (2013)
- H. Testimonials by both youth and adults will be incorporated into the various worship services and other congregational gatherings. (2013)
- I. The Staff will be encouraged to present a brief children’s sermon at each service (even those including baptisms), to continue using a series of themed sermons, and to incorporate the cultural and political background of the scripture into sermons to provide perspective. (2013)
- J. Eastminster will hold communion more frequently and do so by intinction more often. (2013)
- K. One or more services will be offered on days other than Sunday so members who are unable to attend a Sunday service in a given week can still participate in corporate worship. (2014)

**2. Goal:**

Eastminster will effectively communicate the fullness of its worship opportunities so that members and visitors can meaningfully integrate them into their daily lives and make concerted efforts to share these worship opportunities with shut-ins and others who cannot attend in person.

**Action:**

- A. The “special person” program will be expanded beyond the Deacons so members can systemically participate in weekly visits to homebound members who desire them. (2013)
- B. Services will be recorded to DVD and other portable media to enable members to effectively share the services during these visits. (2013)
- C. Current social media will be used to inform members and nonmembers of worship opportunities and to send devotionals and Bible verses. (2013)

**3. Goal:**

Eastminster will make concerted efforts to make both visitors and new members feel welcomed and loved and to effectively integrate them into the life and activities of the church.

**Action:**

- A. Visitors will be greeted in the parking lot and be provided a ribbon to identify them as visitors. The church’s youth and adult members will usher and guide them to the nursery, Sunday School rooms and the worship service of their choice, and give

them an information packet that tells them about the church and its opportunities for service. (2013)

- B. Visitors and new members will be matched with “sponsors” that better fit their stations of life. (2013)

#### **4. Goal:**

Eastminster will enhance its worship opportunities by empowering members and visitors through electronic media outreach to prepare for services in advance and to continue to study and benefit from them when they conclude.

##### **Action:**

- A. Devotional materials related to the upcoming sermons, sermon notes or outlines, “podcasts” or similar media of prior sermons, and similar materials will be made available (in both paper and electronic format to the extent practicable). (2014)

#### **5. Goal:**

Eastminster will empower members to have rich and meaningful personal worship experiences with the living God throughout the week.

##### **Action:**

- A. The extension of the “small group” concept of Vision 2020 to Bible Studies and other spiritual support groups for members will be encouraged and supported. (2013)

## II. Faith Formation in Children, Youth and Young Adults

*Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray. Proverbs 22:6*

*Enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it. Matthew 7:13-14*

In 2020, Eastminster will be committed to forming a solid foundation for the faith development of our youth and young adults. We understand that the adolescent years to early adulthood are difficult times for many and therefore will make it a point of emphasis to cater to the needs of this segment of our congregation.

### 1. Goal:

Eastminster will have a variety of age-appropriate mission and service projects. It will demonstrate a commitment to the idea that faith development is enhanced and informed by service and mission, as well as the notion that a call to service and mission springs from a developing faith.

#### Action:

- A. Regular local mission opportunities so children, youth and young adults can participate will continue. (2014)
- B. Joint mission trips for youth and their parents will become regular events. (2014)
- C. International missions will be expanded for adults and youth. (2015)

### 2. Goal:

Eastminster will equip, empower, and train parents to be centrally involved in the faith development of their off-spring of all ages.

#### Action:

- A. Staffing needs will be re-evaluated to insure parents have the resource of professional staff to equip them to be involved in the faith development of children. (2014)
- B. Parenting classes (both in person and via social media) will be implemented to support parents with faith development in the home. (2015)
- C. Guest speakers will be regularly invited in as resources to assist parents with faith development. (2016)

### **3. Goal:**

Eastminster will have a strategic interest in engaging college-age young adults to continue to be active in the church.

#### **Action:**

- A. Even before they enter college, high school seniors will participate in a multi-week “Capstone Experience” of study and service. (2014)
- B. Targeted ministries will be implemented to keep graduating high school seniors engaged with church programs. (2014)
- C. A strategic plan will be established and implemented to engage college students in the local Columbia community (USC, Columbia College, Midlands Technical College, etc.). (2014)
- D. Technology will be used by Eastminster to maintain contact with its college students in a strategic and comprehensive way. (2015)

### **4. Goal:**

Eastminster will demonstrate a serious commitment to the faith formation of children, youth and young adults in completing a critical review of Sunday School format and content.

#### **Action:**

- A. Eastminster will complete a review of “what works / what doesn’t” with the Sunday School format. (2014)
- B. Data from the review of the Sunday School format will be used to develop an aggressive program of training for teachers, either for the traditional Sunday School format (if maintained) or a revised format. (2014)
- C. A review will be completed of a strong curriculum to teach the basics of scripture to children and youth. (2014)
- D. A vision of continuous faith development from cradle to 18 will be established. Expectations and outcomes for each age will be communicated to parents and Sunday School teachers. (2014)

### **5. Goal:**

Eastminster will foster faith formation in children, youth and young adults through the strategic use of various attractive, affordable and accessible technologies.

#### **Action:**

- A. Current technology (e-mail, tweets) will be used to send out daily devotionals after the sermon each week. (2014)
- B. Classrooms throughout the church will be updated to be fully adaptable to technology, including monitors and web-access. (2014)

## **6. Goal**

Eastminster will take intentional steps to promote diversity in our congregation and to help the membership of all ages understand more completely what it means to be a Christian in a diverse world.

### **Action:**

- A. The church will participate in local mission projects with traditionally African-American and Latino congregations. (2014)
- B. Training programs for parents will be implemented to help them address parenting questions about other Christian denominations, Islam and other Non-Christian traditions. (2016)

## **7. Goal:**

Eastminster will complete a critical re-evaluation of the Eastminster Day School as a setting for faith formation of children and the role of their parents. After prayer, study and discussion, Eastminster will implement the findings.

### **Action:**

- A. We will conduct the re-evaluation. (2014)
- B. We will begin implanting findings. (2015)

### III. Faith Formation and Discipleship for Adults

*I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. **John 15:5***

*Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. **John 8:12***

In 2020, Eastminster will be committed to lifelong faith development, with all faith opportunities rooted in the Word. Our adult program will link Christian living to study, prayer, worship and service, thus emphasizing faith formation of adults as much as that of children.

#### 1. Goal:

Eastminster will communicate effectively through publications and technology.

##### Action:

- A. An ongoing up-to-date list and description of adult curriculum and offerings will be published. This information will also be prominently displayed on the church's website so members and potential members alike can easily find information about a class or a small group suited for their needs. (2013)
- B. Eastminster will evaluate its technology and make plans for implementing improvements. In addition, Eastminster will update its email list and validate the communication preferences (by email, phone, etc.) of members. Daily Bible verses, membership milestones, passages and prayer lists, among other communications, will be sent to members, including birth and death announcements. (2013)
- C. A part-time librarian will be hired to coordinate library volunteers and to promote awareness and increased use of our resources and integrate all forms of media. (2014)

#### 2. Goal:

Eastminster members will actively find and participate in Sunday School classes that meet their needs and encourage spiritual growth.

##### Action:

- A. Inventive ways to encourage members and potential members to engage in our church's Sunday School classes and small groups will be developed. (2013)
- B. Because we understand engagement must take place for new members from the very beginning, there will be a plan for ushering new members from their new member class to a Sunday School class. (2013)
- C. There will be guidelines developed for organizing, starting, merging or stopping a Sunday School class or small group. (2013)

- D. An open class will meet on Sunday mornings for those who need to serve communion or greet, haven't found a Sunday School class or travel frequently and feel they can't commit to a regular class. This class will provide an opportunity for a series of speakers, a coffee hour, a time where members can present their faith journeys, etc. This will also be an opportunity for intergenerational interaction. (2013)
- E. Eastminster will offer Sunday School classes on other religions, the history of the church, timely issues in society, authors-based series, marriage enrichment and parenting, among other issues. (2013)
- F. "Shake it up Sunday" will take place once a quarter so members can invite a friend to go to a different Sunday School class. All adult classes might be teaching the same lesson that day, but the class composition would be different. (2014)
- G. Sunday School teacher training will be developed to strengthen faith formation in adult Sunday School classes. (2014)

### **3. Goal:**

Eastminster will be a church where adults can always find a small group that suits their needs. From circles to Bible studies and topic-focused groups, Eastminster will be known for fellowship in small groups.

#### **Action:**

- A. Bible studies for different groups will be developed following the Vision 2020 model for multiple meeting times and locations. All members will be encouraged to participate. These groups will meet at Eastminster and in members' homes, downtown and various other locations. (2014)
- B. Circles will be evaluated to increase participation and attendance. (2014)
- C. A church-wide book club will be initiated where all members read the same book or set up small groups where everyone is reading the same book. There will also be a "Lunch and Learn" program one day each week or every other week. (2014)
- D. Eastminster will become known as a church that offers situational study groups for parents of high school students, college students, children of parents who are suffering with Alzheimer's, etc., beginning in 2014. This ministry will be expanded to groups for entire families experiencing a crisis. Eastminster will also implement a program for members where childcare will be offered at the church on a particular night so couples can benefit from marriage enrichment time. (2015)

### **4. Goal:**

Eastminster will create a lifelong-learning program that "ties it all together for Christian living," called Invitation to Discipleship. The program will encompass the major areas of faith formation and discipleship.

**Action:**

- A. The curriculum will include Bible study, prayer, readings, small groups, service, theology, parenting, financial responsibility, etc. (stages of life)—any area in which faith can be nurtured, understood, and acted out to develop and strengthen it. (2016)
- B. A training program for “discipleship counselors,” who, once trained, will work with individuals will be developed. The counselors are like college, high school, or career counselors and even similar to Stephen ministers in their intensive training, but with this goal: to help individuals develop a personal plan for study and growth by first seeing the larger picture of their development as faithful Christians. (2017)
- C. Counselors will be able to work with small groups as well as individuals by 2018. We will offer the program to other churches within and outside the denomination (as does Bethel, Stephen Ministry, etc.). (2020)

## IV. Missions and Evangelism

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. **Philippians 2:3-4***

In 2020, Eastminster will be a congregation committed to serving others with humble and joyful hearts. Serving others, Eastminster's presence will be felt locally, nationally and globally. Eastminster members will seek to have bold faith and model Christian behavior by emptying themselves and being obedient to the Gospel.

### 1. Goal:

Eastminster will examine the missions supported by the church and ensure the organizations are supported not only financially, but through personal relationships, as well. Eastminster will continue to make missions a priority and have a balance of local, national and international missions.

#### **Action:**

- A. The church will have a yearly process for evaluating missions, narrowing the focus of missions supported if indicated, and will ensure that each ministry is supported by Eastminster. (2016)
- B. Eastminster will grow current missions into other areas (i.e., spread lunch buddies to other schools, offer Champs outreach to more schools). (2016)
- C. Members of the congregation will serve as board members for 25% of mission organizations. (2018)

### 2. Goal:

Eastminster members will have easy access to information about missions the church supports, and mission conversations will be integrated into church activities.

#### **Action:**

- A. A mission video loop will run on church-wide flat screen televisions. (2013)
- B. The "Update" will carry a section on missions. (2013)
- C. There will be organized opportunities to learn about mission trips after participants return. (2015)
- D. A mission fair will be held each year. (2015)
- E. Church services will include a "minute for missions" at least once a month. (2015)
- F. There will be organized opportunities for members to give to Eastminster missions during Christmas in honor of a loved one. (2017)
- G. There will be increased awareness of the missionaries supported by Eastminster and their service. This will be evidenced by one or more of the following: video

updates from missionaries, written letters from missionaries included in "Update" or in special newsletters, visits to Eastminster by missionaries when able. (2017)

- H. An organized section of the website will be established to detail information about each supported mission, service opportunities, and point of contact. (2017)

### **3. Goal:**

Missions at Eastminster will be multi- and inter-generational with increased involvement from all members of the congregation. Members will be aware of their spiritual gifts and equipped to serve in areas needed.

#### **Action:**

- A. There will be an increase in one-day missions to encourage increased involvement. Eastminster will have two one-day mission projects per month. (2013)
- B. Children and youth will be involved in missions and have quarterly mission projects. (2013)
- C. Sunday School classes will support an individual mission project. (2013)
- D. There will be more opportunities to bring items (i.e., hats, socks, books, coats) on Sunday to support local missions, such as peanut butter Sunday. (2016)
- E. There will be opportunities to match members with service opportunities by helping members discover their spiritual gifts. This might include an on-line spiritual gifts survey, spiritual gifts classes or sermons. (2017)
- F. Time and talent sheets will be better used in the area of missions. Members will be contacted about potential service to designated missions within 72 hours. (2017)

### **4. Goal:**

Eastminster members will be more equipped for evangelism.

#### **Action:**

- A. Joint Sunday school classes will be held to discuss evangelism. (2016)
- B. Wednesday night and weekday classes/discussions will be held on evangelism (i.e. - in the workplace). (2017)
- C. A "Christinaity 101" type Sunday School class will be established. (2017)

### **5. Goal:**

Eastminster will work with other churches towards a common goal.

#### **Action:**

- A. Eastminster will build a habitat house with another church. (2015)
- B. Eastminster will have a "church-swap" with another church where ministers and/or choirs will swap places. (2015)

- C. Eastminster will invite other churches and members of the community to hear guest speakers one or more times per year. (2017)

**6. Goal:**

Visitors will feel welcomed to Eastminster

**Action:**

- A. Greeters will meet members at parking spaces and walk them into church. (2016)

**7. Goal:**

Eastminster will continue to use its facilities to serve others.

**Action:**

- A. Pizza and devotionals might be offered to persons who visit/attend classes at the CLC. (2015)
- B. A newsletter will be sent to persons who use the CLC who might not be members of Eastminster. (2016)
- C. Classes will be offered in the CLC that will be open to the community. (2016)
- D. Basketball games will be a time for evangelism. (2017)

**8. Goal:**

Eastminster will go beyond its comfort zone to be a powerful presence in the community.

**Action:**

- A. Eastminster will be a facility that participates in Family Promise for homeless families. (2020)

**9. Goal:**

Eastminster will continue to have a focus on changing hearts.

**Action:**

- A. Postcards will be sent out regarding upcoming sermon series for members and persons who may wish to visit. (2018)
- B. Social media will be used to promote the Gospel. (2018)
- C. There will be an increase in adult baptisms by 5% yearly. (2020)
- D. There will be increased attendance in worship services by 10% average annually. (2020)
- E. Sermons will be televised. (2020)

## V. Our Life Together

*For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. 2 Peter 1:5-7*

In 2020, Eastminster will humbly acknowledge that all we have and all we are come from the Living God's gifts of love, redemption and salvation. In appreciation for these gifts, we will respond not only by loving, praising, and worshiping the Living God, but also by loving, caring for and supporting one another, our community and our world.

### 1. Goal:

Eastminster will intentionally develop and support opportunities for fellowship among believers, recognizing that Christian fellowship fosters and strengthens Christian communities.

#### Action:

- A. Eastminster will sponsor periodic receptions, brunches, covered dish suppers and other meal-related opportunities for cross-generational fellowship between services and at other times when our members are on the church grounds. (2013)
- B. Cross-generational opportunities for Christian fellowship in small groups such as supper clubs, professional men's and women's Bible studies downtown, and prayer breakfasts will be organized. (2013)
- C. A brief devotional and prayer will be introduced into the basketball games and other events held at the Christian Life Center. (2013)
- D. Social functions based on members' interests, such as movie nights, talent shows, oyster roasts, fishing trips, campouts, hunting trips, and volleyball games will be started. (2013)
- E. The Sportsman's Banquet will expand beyond the membership of the church and become a community event to attract new members to Eastminster. (2013)
- F. An occasional series of Coffee House talks with Mark or Brad will be put in place. (2013)
- G. A regularly updated online membership directory that includes photos, contact information, skill sets and interests of members will be created. (2013)
- H. A robust program to maintain contact with and support members who attend college in other towns and develop fellowship opportunities for college students in our town will be initiated. (2013)
- I. A concerted effort to integrate new members into the life of the church by having one or more Staff members participate in each Inquirer's class, having one or more adult Sunday School teachers present a portion of each Inquirer's class, and

organizing new member luncheons with members of the various church committees will be started. (2014)

- J. Eastminster will offer in-town “retreats” during Advent, Lent, and other church seasons and faith-based trips to places in addition to the Holy Land. (2016)

## **2. Goal:**

Eastminster will identify and meet the needs of its members, its community, and its world.

### **Action:**

- A. Various ways for members to discreetly inform the church of needs and requests for help (including “I Need” envelopes in the pews) and for the church to appropriately respond to those needs and requests will be developed. (2013)
- B. Marriage enrichment courses will be offered to our members beginning in 2013, and Confirmation Classes can earn credit for service projects by volunteering to assist the nursery staff in providing child care during these sessions.
- C. The Deacon’s “special person” ministry will be expanded to matching shut-ins and residents of assisted-care facilities and their families with members who volunteer to visit them. (2013)
- D. The opportunities for members to participate in mission trips and service projects will be expanded by offering additional trips and projects that are less expensive and closer to home. (2014)

## **3. Goal:**

Eastminster will honor its seniors by offering them a wide diversity of opportunities, camaraderie and support at each stage of their lives.

### **Action:**

- A. A process to help our seniors identify their needs and communicate those needs to the church will be implemented. We will be careful to recognize and respect the wide diversity of age, health, stations of life and interests of our seniors. (2013)
- B. A number of exercise classes, nutritional seminars and similar fitness activities for our seniors will be developed. (2013)
- C. Taking into account the needs that seniors identified in 2013, a wide variety of activities and small groups will be created for our seniors, including classes on computers and other technology and opportunities for our seniors to interact with younger members (including mentoring younger married couples). (2014)
- D. Seniors will be offered transportation to and from church activities. (2014)
- E. Eastminster will begin offering Bible studies, music programs and other activities at the Presbyterian Home, Still Hopes and other assisted living facilities. Our youth will be integrated into these activities. (2015)

#### **4. Goal:**

Eastminster will honor the spiritual gifts God has given each of us by integrating persons of all generations into our activities.

##### **Action:**

- A. Sunday school classes, circles, study groups and other groups will periodically invite persons of various generations to guest-teach, present faith stories and otherwise actively participate in the group's activities. (2013)
- B. Eastminster will encourage inter-generational study of scripture by scheduling periodic joint Sunday School classes that combine two or more specific classes of different generations (children, young adults, adults and seniors). (2013)
- C. A "Foster Grandparent" program will be developed to encourage more meaningful interaction between our youth and our seniors. (2015)

#### **5. Goal:**

Eastminster will implement programs to re-engage inactive members.

##### **Action:**

- A. A committee will research ways other churches encourage inactive members and evaluate programs related to this ministry. Then members who want to lead this outreach will be trained to tactfully approach inactive members in love. It will be important to contact these members personally and listen to their situation. (2014)
- B. Eastminster will introduce an "invite a member" program. We will start by defining "active member/family" and "inactive member/family." Definitions will include demographics. An active member can select an inactive member with similar demographics to invite to an Eastminster event. The active member will repeat the process with several other inactive members during a six-month period. Then we will measure the results and perhaps fine-tune the program. (2014)

## VI. Congregational Care

*Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples – when they see the love you have for each other. **John 13:34-35***

*Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. **Matthew 11:28-30***

In 2020, Eastminster members will accept, love, forgive and affirm one another. We will celebrate the joys mourn the sorrows of life together. We will seek to provide resources for members at each stage of life and to love each other as Christ loves us.

### 1. Goal:

Eastminster will continue programs that have shown their effectiveness in meeting needs of various demographics in the congregation. Those programs include but are not limited to revised / updated versions of Stephen ministry, Food for the Soul, Care Teams, Crossroads Ministry, Prayer Shawls, Prayer cards. This also includes the affirmation of a professional staff position to coordinate congregational care efforts.

#### Action:

- A. Staffing needs will continue to be evaluated for our developing faith community to ensure we are staffed to address congregational care needs. (2013)
- B. Eastminster will enhance programs offered at the CLC that address the physical wellness of our community as well as the spiritual and emotional wellness of our faith community. These programs will address obesity in our congregation. (2013)
- C. Eastminster will evaluate the role of Stephen Ministry and expand it, as needed, to address the congregation's changing needs. In addition, Eastminster will focus on providing support and care for caregivers to better equip them for challenges. (2015)

### 2. Goal:

Eastminster will develop new programs to address a diverse congregation which includes stronger representation from the Hispanic, African-American and Asian communities. The congregation will include a stronger representation of groups such as those 65 and older, more widows/widowers, more blended families, single-parent families, families with at least one veteran or someone in military service, and church members who are differently-abled or have special needs.

**Action:**

- A. Eastminster will develop a strategy to assist in transportation needs for those without capacity to drive and wanting to participate in church programs. (2013)
- B. Programs for effective parenting to equip parents to bring children up knowing traditional Christian values and ethics as those children encounter an increasingly diverse secular community will be developed. (2013)
- C. In our culturally diverse congregation, a “cultural competency” program to assist members who have care needs will be instituted. (2015)
- D. A program to address care needs for college age members pertaining to finances, relationships, careers, etc., will be started. (2016)

**3. Goal:**

Eastminster will use creative technology and various conduits of communication to alert members to prayer needs, to help members know of church programs of support, and to facilitate contacting the church when there is a personal need.

**Action:**

- A. Eastminster will initiate an electronic web-based bulletin board, easily navigable and intuitive, where members can post personal prayer requests and learn of members needing prayer and other support. (2013)
- B. Eastminster will begin using e-mail, Facebook, and Twitter to notify members of prayer needs and those who need support. (2013)
- C. Eastminster will implement a program of supportive small-groups that will facilitate communicating needs within the groups and with the larger congregation. These groups will be both “open” (moving in and out, permeable) and “closed.” (2013)
- D. Eastminster will develop an electronic pictorial directory, easily updated by church staff and readily accessible to the congregation. (2013)
- E. Eastminster will launch a prayer hotline/text line. (2016)

**4. Goal:**

Eastminster will introduce innovative ways of equipping and training members to participate in programs of congregational care. This training will involve all demographics of the congregation, including young people.

**Action:**

- A. A comprehensive program to help members understand their own spiritual gifts, particularly those related to congregational care, will be developed. (2013)
- B. Eastminster will put in place an aggressive recruiting plan to quickly engage new (and old) members into programs that support our developing vision of congregational care. (2013)

- C. A variety of intergenerational programs/opportunities will be implemented to facilitate interaction between different generations and segments of our congregation and might include visitation of shut-ins by the youth. (2013)
- D. Eastminster will develop a comprehensive booklet, available on-line and hardcopy, educating the congregation about grief and healthy grieving. This will include contact information for grief support resources in the community. (2015)
- E. Eastminster will develop a three-month-long program called “Christian Care:101” to equip members with active listening skills, as well as training for how to pray with a church member in need. (2016)
- F. Eastminster will have a life coach/faith coach program. (2018)
- G. A solid mentoring program will be implemented to further support and develop members with gifts and interest in lay-membership congregational care. (2019)

## VII. Stewardship and Kingdom Vision

*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21*

In 2020, Eastminster will realize that all we have is a gift from God, to be used for Him eagerly and cheerfully. Eastminster is blessed with amazing facilities and an abundance of resources that it will strive to use to serve God daily.

### 1. Goal:

Eastminster will have introspection and give beyond its comfort level. In response to this, Eastminster will give more financially and in service that it did in years past, with increased giving from members who were previously less active.

#### **Action:**

- A. Stewardship will be broken up into two seasons (fall-financial / spring-time and talent). (2013)
- B. Electronic giving will be available. (2013)
- C. There will be personal communication year-round so individuals are not just getting phone calls during pledge time but throughout the year. (2015)
- D. There will be increase in endowments by 5% annually. (2015)
- E. Ministers will meet one-on-one with families about tithing. (2020)

### 2. Goal:

Eastminster will continue to be debt free. All capital campaigns will be paid off in 36 months.

### 3. Goal:

Eastminster will reach all generations in the area of stewardship, with a year-round focus on the importance of stewardship. All members will have an understanding of the concept of stewardship, including stewardship of time, talents and resource.

#### **Action:**

- A. There will be increased awareness of stewardship of the environment through recycling. (2013)
- B. All Sunday School classes will have an individual lesson on Stewardship. (2015)
- C. The college-aged demographic will be involved in stewardship with an increase in giving from this demographic by 2% annually. (2015)
- D. There will be an increased emphasis on training of parents for children to be more involved in stewardship. This will include providing families with devotions on stewardship and having envelopes for children. (2015)

- E. There will be pamphlets describing stewardship. (2015)
- F. Classes will be offered on stewardship of time/talents and on the charities that Eastminster supports and the importance of such charities. One class will be offered annually at We @ EPC. (2017)

#### **4. Goal:**

Eastminster will communicate the JOY of giving.

##### **Action:**

- A. Information on monies donated will be communicated through various forms of media, including the flat screens around the church. (2013)
- B. There will be more personal testimonies about giving and the impact it has. (2013)
- C. There will be financial updates on the church website. (2015)

#### **5. Goal:**

Eastminster will be more intentional about opening its facilities to the community, and the atmosphere will allow us to share Christ's love.

##### **Action:**

- A. Basketball practices and games will be an opportunity to witness God's love as we do such things as have prayer before games, have Bible lesson during half-time and have Jubilee play music during half-time and/or before the game. (2013)
- B. We will help support the Shepherd's Center with increased participation by Eastminster members. (2013)
- C. We will invite the Bradley Elementary children to a program once a month or support a Bradley basketball team. (2013)
- D. We will sponsor miscellaneous social programs to invite others. (2015)
- E. We will have fitness seminars and faith-based exercise programs. (2015)
- F. We will open the church for members to participate in hobbies such as crafting. (2015)
- G. We will use our facilities to support the homeless adults and children in our community. (2017)
- H. A goal will be set for facility outreach. There will be an increase in the number of annual classes that involve the community. Attendance will increase by 10% for non-church members. (2018)
- I. We will open our church to charitable organizations that need a location. One charitable organization per year will meet at Eastminster facilities. (2018)
- J. We will provide a space for Jubilee Academy (possibly the third floor multi-purpose room). (2018)

K. We will continue to have inspirational displays on walking tracks.

## 6. Goal:

Our members will use their personal and professional skills to help others.

### Action:

- A. We will provide musical programs for the Presbyterian community at Lexington at least once per year. (2016)
- B. We will offer classes on living wills, end-of-life plans, funeral plans and memorial wishes. (2016)
- C. We will continue to offer the Financial Peace University class once per year. (2018)
- D. A "New Year's Offering" might be initiated, at which time an individual would be allowed to fill out a card that says something like, *"Here I am Lord; use me. I offer myself, my gifts, and what I know how to do to the glory of God. I would like to serve by doing the following: \_\_\_\_\_."* (2019)
- E. We will use a Help Wanted/Help Offered exchange where members could ask for and give help (i.e. knit, read to people, help with college applications, take down Christmas trees, build, cook, design web pages, garden, etc.). (2019)
- F. We will continue to support Transitions Center.
- G. We will continue to use medical talent on medical missions or the free medical clinic.

## 7. Goal:

Individuals will be able to designate their time/talent contributions in an effective manner and receive a timely response.

### Action:

- A. Eastminster will communicate more appropriately on programs offered by the church so individuals can make decisions about getting involved. (2018)
- B. We will have an annual resource fair to share talents. (2018)

## 8. Goal:

Our facilities will be updated and modernized.

- A. Eastminster will have eye-catching signs about events. (2013)
- B. Eastminster will have a coffee bar for college-age young people. (2015)
- C. Eastminster will have a prayer chapel that will be open at all times. (2020)
- D. Thompson Hall and the sanctuary will be updated. (2020)

**9. Goal:**

Eastminster Day School will continue to be a strong and vibrant ministry of Eastminster.

- A. The Day School will have a scholarship program for a child in need. (2018)
- B. The Day School will provide after-school care for Eastminster elementary-age children for a fee (such as TRUMC and Shandon Presbyterian offer). (2020)

**10. Goal:**

Eastminster will have a program established for transportation of members to church who would otherwise be unable to attend. (2017)